

2018 Jackson/Ella Sharp Park After Action Report

It was the 34th year, as well as the '1st' year of this event, and while we learned a few things that we can improve upon for next year, I think this new venue gives the event, as well as a hobby, a breath of fresh air and a great foundation to build on.

Arriving Friday things were certainly different, and a bit of a learning experience (hopefully no one went to Cascades Park!). Once we figured out the Federal camp and parking, we were good to go. Tip of the hat to Keith Graham Harrison and Thomas Berlucchi for their excellent work laying the camps out, I don't think I have ever seen a camp so well organized.

I was pleased to find on Saturday morning we had 6 decent sized Federal companies but saddened that our drill was delayed twice due to rain. We were finally able to take the field around 11:00a for some much-needed drill. The sun appeared just before our battle of Shiloh, and specifically we portrayed a portion of the engagement where the 15th Michigan was involved. We were fortunate enough to have had Ray Berarls put some time into drawing an excellent map of the battle, which we used for planning.

The battle went according to plan and Scott Cummings (after changing uniforms a few times like Superman) and crew served as our anchor, skirmishing with the Rebs. The main body of the Army took the field utilizing on the left by files into line (well-practiced...). Russ Paul (4th Michigan Co A and the 15th Michigan) were called up from camp to anchor our left flank but didn't bring any ammunition!! (this was part of the scenario). Russ fixed bayonets and took a beating from the Rebs until he retired to re-supply, then came back with a vengeance.

A couple 'thanks' to point out...first, I think we can all agree that while I didn't use Mark D. Heath to his fullest extent, I got a lot better at using him (as evidenced by having some of my voice left). Thanks to Mark for his skills, as well as the great drumming by TJ BerlucchiJ and crew.

Saturday afternoon the re-enacting weather gods continued to smile upon us as we were able to perform Parade. I was glad Nathan Tingley jumped in at the last minute to help with the Adjutant role and this gathering (great job Nate!) (once TJ remembered we were having it, we had music). ☺

Saturday evening, I made my normal stroll through camp and somehow agreed to a medical procedure performed by Marty Walker and the 3rd Michigan...and I wasn't drinking, I promise. Anyway, thanks for the 're-alignment' Marty. Farther down on my stroll I stumbled into a conversation 6th company was having regarding tick identification removal...it is a conversation I have been trying to forget ever since.

On Sunday Andrew McComas took over for 2nd Company. Scott Lawalin, having done a solid job on Saturday, continued his performance on Sunday. As you may have noticed there seemed to be some issues with Confederate attendance, and as much as I teased Scot Spiekerman about it, it was very gracious of him and his boys to be willing to galvanize to make the battle scenario work. Thanks Scot, and I still didn't get a pair of red pants...

The staff was phenomenal. As pointed out by Douglas McComas, it was quite a mix. Chad Johnson probably ran about 10 miles for me during drill and the battle. This is the second time I asked Chad to serve and he did a wonderful job. I have been working with Denny Whiting regularly for quite some time and he never disappoints, and new to the staff was Nick Miner, who did a nice job at Major through the weekend. Thanks to J.R. Schroeder who was our Medical Officer, as well as the 8th Michigan Medical.

I must comment, as I usually do, how much of a pleasure it is to work with Greg Van Wey and his crew, so easy to work with, so willing to do the right thing, always a welcome change.

Side note, I 'created' an event for 2019 Hartford City Civil War Days on the Cumberland Guard Facebook page, October 18, 19, 20, 2019.